

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7920

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 15708

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, PFOR, LE

SUBJ: COMMERCIAL DISCRIMINATION BASED ON JEWISH FAITH

REF: STATE 304652

1. RE REFTEL, DEPARTMENT'S UNDERSTANDING IS CORRECT THAT GOL DOES NOT SANCTION DISCRIMINATION AGAINST PERSONS OF THE JEWISH FAITH, AND LEBANESE BUSINESS COMMUNITY DOES NOT CURRENTLY ENGAGE IN SUCH DISCRIMINATION.

2. AS REPORTED IN THE PAST, THERE ARE SEVERAL BUSINESSES (INCLUDING TWO BANKS) OWNED BY LEBANESE NATIONALS OF JEWISH FAITH. BUSINESSMEN VISITING LEBANON ARE NOT QUESTIONED ABOUT THEIR RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION WHEN GRANTED VISAS.

3. A CLEAR RECENT EXAMPLE OF THE LACK OF DISCRIMINATION WAS THE LARGE INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL PROMOTION CONFERENCE HELD IN BEIRUT LAST MAY ATTENDED BY COMPANIES FROM WESTERN EUROPE, THE UNITED STATES AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES. THE SPONSORS OF THE CONFERENCE WAS A COMPANY HEADED BY A PERSON OF JEWISH FAITH ORIGINALLY FROM EGYPT. HIS RELIGIOUS AFILIATION WAS WELL KNOWN LOCALLY. NONETHELESS THE CONFERENCE RECEIVED OFFICIAL SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT FROM ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING THE LEBANESE BUSINESS AND BANKING COMMUNITY AND INVOLVED SEVERAL MEETINGS HERE IN LEBANON WITH THE PERSON IN QUESTION.

GODLEY

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